MARVEL

ROBINSON
PUGH
CHARALAMPIDIS

004

SALVATION.
NOW.
THEY GO INTO BATTLE--THESE THREE MEN--THEY GO...
THE VISION. JIM HAMMOND. SIMON WILLIAMS.
...EVEN AFTER WHAT I TELL 'EM.
SO I THINK I GOT US A WAY TO DEFEAT ULTRON...

"...'N' LOOKING AT ***WHAT*** HE'S DONE TA HIS ROBOTS 'N' THEM UNDEAD FOLK, I THINK HE MAY HAVE HAD THE ***SAME*** NOTION. 'S HOW HE ***COMBINED*** MEAT 'N' METAL IN THOSE MONSTROSITIES."

YOUR ***IONIC ENERGY***, SIMON...

...IT'S LIKE MAGIC...LIKE PIXIE DUST... IT'S--

THAT'S THE ***GLUE***...

I THINK ULTRON SAMPLED SOME OFF YA WHEN HE USED YOUR BODY TO HELP CREATE THE VISION.

THE ENERGY, SEE...IT'S NOT NATURAL...WHAT'S THE WORD, I FORGET--

INORGANIC.

THAT'S IT. ***INORGANIC.*** BUT IT COMING FROM YOU, THAT MAKES IT ORGANIC TOO AT THE SAME TIME, YA UNNERSTAND?

NO. LOOK, SKIP TO THE CHASE, THOSE ULTRONS-ZOMBIE-WHATEVER-THEY-ARE'S, WILL BE THROUGH OUR SHIELD ANY MINUTE.

"THE ULTRONS--ULTRON-ZOMBIES NOW--HAVE A ***COMBINED MIND.*** A HIVE MIND, I GUESS IT'S CALLED.

"I CAN ADJUST THE FREQUENCY OF THE ENERGY BEING TRANSMITTED SO IT ***ABSORBS*** THEIR CONSCIOUSNESS--***AND*** THE ZOMBIES'--ULTRON PLAYED INTO MY HANDS BY ADDING THEM IN, TOO.

"THING IS, I NEED A ***GREATER*** MIND TO CONTROL THEM--CONTROL ULTRON, TOO--AND THAT MIND NEEDS TO BE CONDUCIVE TO IONIC ENERGY."

SO YOU MEAN ***ME?***

I MEAN ***ALL THREE*** OF YOU--THIS NEEDS YOUR ***COMBINED*** WILL TO BE THE BOSS BRAIN. ULTRON HAD YOU CONNECTED UP AT ONE POINT, THAT MAKES THE CONDUIT BETWEEN Y'ALL 'N' THE IONIC ENERGY THE STRONGEST.

BUT YOU DOING IT--I AIN'T SURE, BUT YOU COULD MAYBE LOSE YOUR OWN MINDS AND PERSONALITIES. ***ALL*** OF IT. EVEN YER MEMORIES.

BUT WE'D END THIS BY BEING IN CONTROL. ULTRON. HE'S NO MORE.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?
I ADJUST THE IONIC SHIELD'S PULSE--COULD TAKE ME A MINUTE. WHEN IT'S READY, I FIGGER YOU'LL KNOW.
AT THAT TIME, YOU GO TO THE HEART OF THE ABSORPTION.
WELL 'FORE YOU BECOME--WELL, ERR...
THAT'S IT, NOTHING ELSE?
"...WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE GONNA TURN INTO..."
...YOU GOT ANY GOODBYES TO MAKE, I'D SAY NOW'S A GOOD TIME.

THE MULTIVERSE WAS DESTROYED!

THE HEROES OF EARTH-616 AND EARTH-1610 WERE POWERLESS TO SAVE IT!

NOW, ALL THAT REMAINS...IS **BATTLEWORLD!**

A MASSIVE, PATCHWORK PLANET COMPOSED OF THE FRAGMENTS OF WORLDS THAT NO LONGER EXIST, MAINTAINED BY THE IRON WILL OF ITS GOD AND MASTER, VICTOR VON DOOM!

AT THE END OF THE WORLD LIES THE SHIELD, THE LAST THING BETWEEN CIVILIZATION AND THE TERRORS OF...

SECRET WARS

...WHERE REANIMATED HORDES CRAVE LIVE FLESH...

...OR MECHANIZED MOCKERIES OF MAN ELIMINATE EVERY TRACE OF FLAWED HUMANITY IN...

THEY'RE COMING!

Vision, Jim Hammond, and Simon Williams have protected our sanctuary in The Deadlands ← Salvation as long as they could. Now it's on Hank Pym ← Inventor Antiquated to create our solution. But he better do it fast

The zombies + Ultrons are working together and they're here

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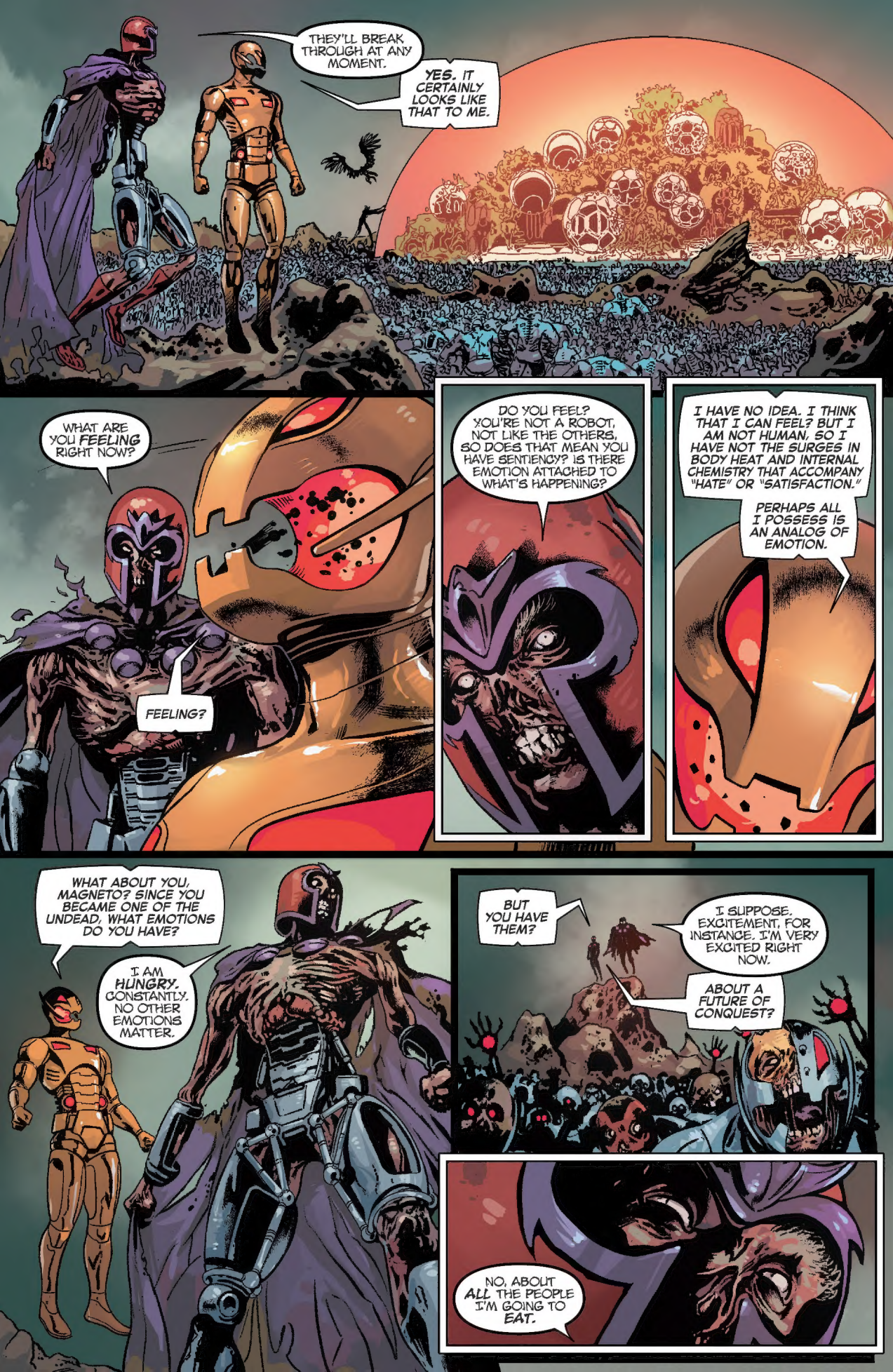

THEY'LL BREAK THROUGH AT ANY MOMENT.
YES. IT CERTAINLY LOOKS LIKE THAT TO ME.
WHAT ARE YOU FEELING RIGHT NOW?
FEELING?
DO YOU FEEL? YOU'RE NOT A ROBOT, NOT LIKE THE OTHERS, SO DOES THAT MEAN YOU HAVE SENTIENCY? IS THERE EMOTION ATTACHED TO WHAT'S HAPPENING?
I HAVE NO IDEA. I THINK THAT I CAN FEEL? BUT I AM NOT HUMAN, SO I HAVE NOT THE SURGES IN BODY HEAT AND INTERNAL CHEMISTRY THAT ACCOMPANY "HATE" OR "SATISFACTION."
PERHAPS ALL I POSSESS IS AN ANALOG OF EMOTION.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, MAGNETO? SINCE YOU BECAME ONE OF THE UNDEAD, WHAT EMOTIONS DO YOU HAVE?
I AM HUNGRY. CONSTANTLY. NO OTHER EMOTIONS MATTER.
BUT YOU HAVE THEM?
I SUPPOSE. EXCITEMENT, FOR INSTANCE. I'M VERY EXCITED RIGHT NOW.
ABOUT A FUTURE OF CONQUEST?
NO, ABOUT ALL THE PEOPLE I'M GOING TO EAT.

I'M CONFUSED, AGATHA. I EXPECTED YOU TO SHOW SOME SADNESS AT THE NEWS.

I'M HEARTBROKEN, MY DARLING, DON'T LET THIS FACADE MAKE YOU THINK OTHERWISE. BUT AT THE SAME TIME...

NO, SIMON, NO. I WON'T LET YOU GO!

IT'S GOTTA BE THIS WAY, BABY. I DON'T LIKE IT ANY MORE THAN YOU, BUT--WELL--I MADE AN OATH, TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF THIS SANCTUARY ABOVE ALL ELSE...ME, JIM, THE VISION, WE ALL DID...

SO IF IT'S A BOY, NAME HIM STEVE, OKAY? HE WAS THE BRAVEST MAN I EVER KNEW.

NOT A CHANCE.

...IT'S JUST THAT I KNEW THIS TIME WOULD COME--

YOU SAW THE FUTURE?

THAT'S BEYOND MY ABILITIES, I'M SORRY TO SAY, NO. I JUST KNEW, MY BEING OLD AND YOU NEVER AGING, THAT OUR PARTING WOULD COME IN TIME.

YES, AND THAT'S THE TRAGEDY.

BUT IT'S I WHO WILL CEASE TO BE AND YOU WHO MUST GO ON.

WHAT KIND OF A MAN WOULD I BE IF I DIDN'T GO THROUGH WITH THIS?

I'M SCARED, MARTE. PETRIFIED.

OH, MY LOVE.

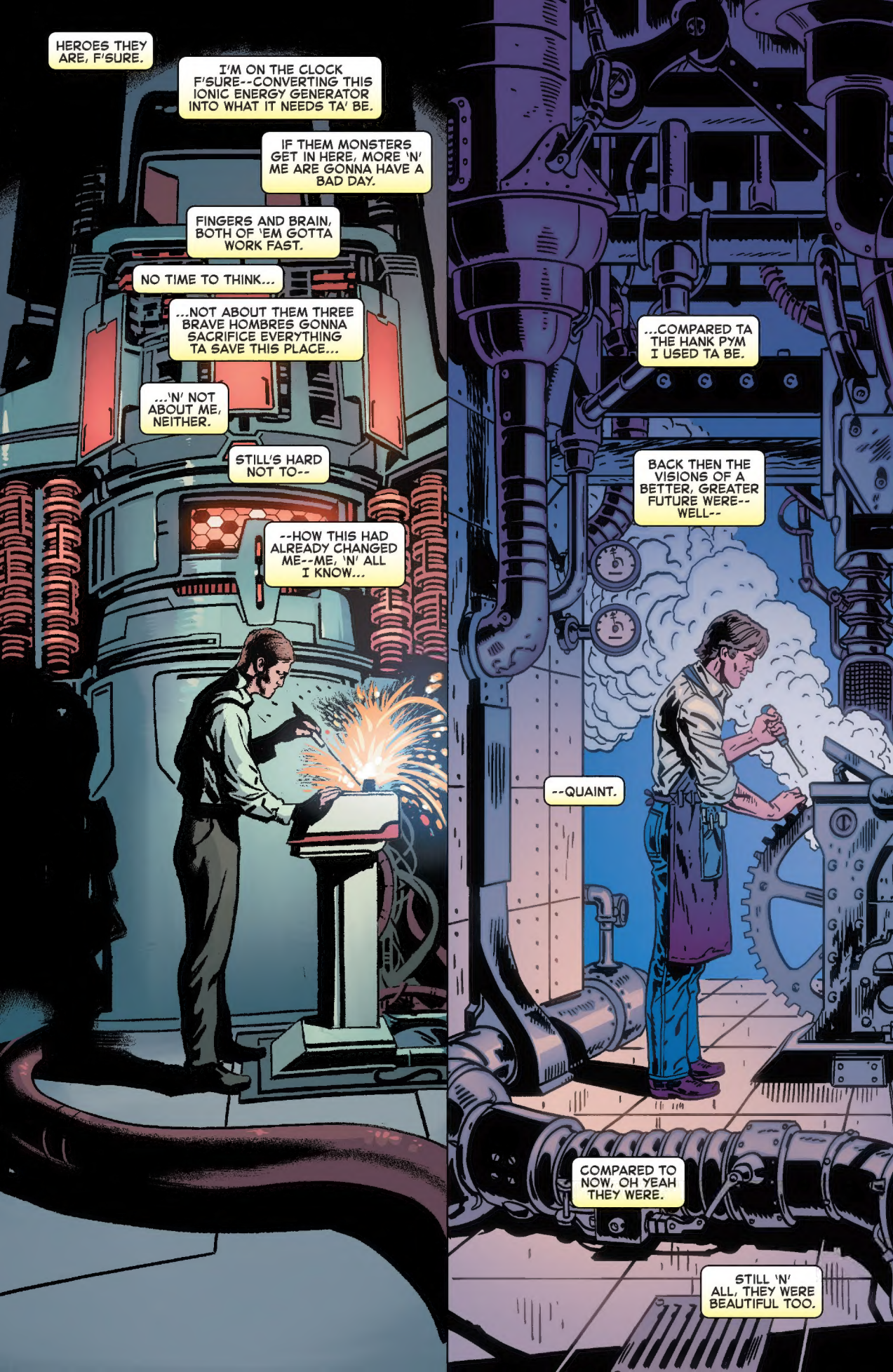
IS THIS ENOUGH? IF I VANISHED INTO WHATEVER PYM RECKONS IS GOING TO HAPPEN, WILL I HAVE--WILL I BE...

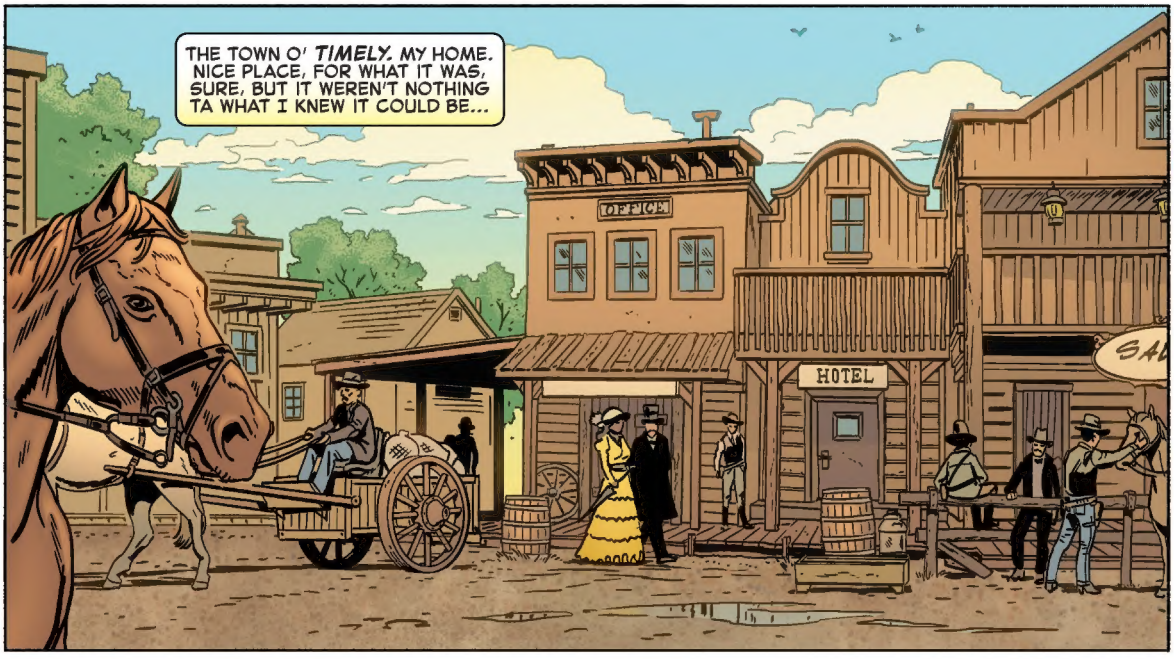
...AND WHAT KIND OF EXISTENCE WILL I HAVE WITHOUT YOU?

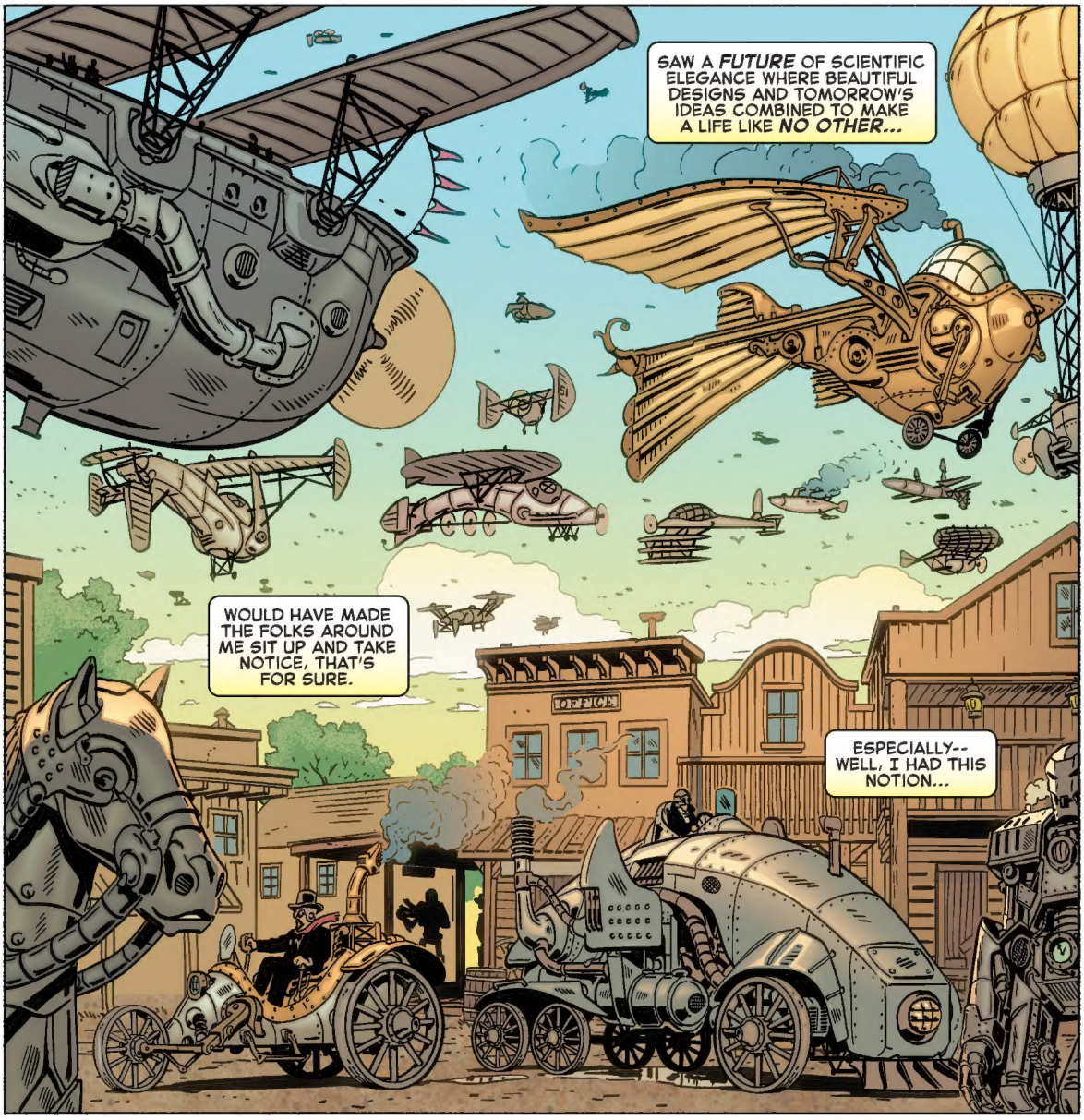
WHAT? WHY NOT?

IF IT'S A BOY, I'M NAMING HIM JIM...AFTER THE BRAVEST MAN I KNOW.

I LOVE YOU, RYOKO, AND I KNOW, NO MATTER WHAT BECOMES OF ME...THAT I ALWAYS WILL.


HEROES THEY ARE, F'SURE.
I'M ON THE CLOCK F'SURE--CONVERTING THIS IONIC ENERGY GENERATOR INTO WHAT IT NEEDS TA' BE.
IF THEM MONSTERS GET IN HERE, MORE 'N' ME ARE GONNA HAVE A BAD DAY.
FINGERS AND BRAIN, BOTH OF 'EM GOTTA WORK FAST.
NO TIME TO THINK...
...NOT ABOUT THEM THREE BRAVE HOMBRES GONNA SACRIFICE EVERYTHING TA SAVE THIS PLACE...
...'N' NOT ABOUT ME, NEITHER.
STILL'S HARD NOT TO--
--HOW THIS HAD ALREADY CHANGED ME--ME, 'N' ALL I KNOW...
...COMPARED TA THE HANK PYM I USED TA BE.
BACK THEN THE VISIONS OF A BETTER, GREATER FUTURE WERE-- WELL--
--QUAINT.
COMPARED TO NOW, OH YEAH THEY WERE.
STILL 'N' ALL, THEY WERE BEAUTIFUL TOO.


THE TOWN O' TIMELY. MY HOME. NICE PLACE, FOR WHAT IT WAS, SURE, BUT IT WEREN'T NOTHING TA WHAT I KNEW IT COULD BE...
OFFICE
HOTEL


SAW A FUTURE OF SCIENTIFIC ELEGANCE WHERE BEAUTIFUL DESIGNS AND TOMORROW'S IDEAS COMBINED TO MAKE A LIFE LIKE NO OTHER...
WOULD HAVE MADE THE FOLKS AROUND ME SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE, THAT'S FOR SURE.
ESPECIALLY-- WELL, I HAD THIS NOTION...
OFFICE

A CLOCKWORK MAN. PERFECT. YOU WIND HIM UP AND HAVE HIM DO THE JOBS TOO TOUGH OR ROUGH OR WRONG FOR A MAN.
BUT I WANTED TO MAKE IT STRONG--STRONGER THAN THE ORES I HAD T' HAND.
HEARD ABOUT ONE THAT COULDN'T BREAK OR BEND--A METAL SO STRONG IT'D NEVER FALTER.
ADAMANTIUM.
TROUBLE WAS, THERE WEREN'T NONE IN TIMELY--NOT ANY THAT I COULD GET MY HANDS ON, AT LEAST.
SO I GOT ME SOME FROM ONE OF THE OTHER DOMAINS.
DON'T KNOW WHICH ONE, DON'T RECALL BEING TOLD...FELLA WHO SOLD IT TO ME WAS A MIGHT SHADY ON A LOT OF THE DETAILS, POINT O'FACT.
LIKE HOW DOOM DIDN'T TAKE KINDLY TO ADAMANTIUM GOING FROM ONE DOMAIN TO ANOTHER. SOMETHING ABOUT HOW IT "UPSET THE BALANCE"...
...LEAST THAT'S WHAT THE THOR SAID, 'FORE HE TOOK ME AWAY.

LOOKIN' BACK, IT SEEMS SO SILLY...MY GRAND PLANS GOIN' NOWHERE--WELL 'CEPT HERE I GUESS.
ME, NOW...KNOWING MORE 'N' I EVER DREAMED I COULD OR WOULD...
...AND BEIN' A HERO TOO I GUESS...TRYIN' TA BE ANYWAY.
PEOPLE TA SAVE AND A CLOCK THAT'S TICKING...
...JUST LIKE MY CLOCKWORK MAN WAS SUPPOSED TA.
HOW SOON, PYM?
A MINUTE MORE...JUST A SEC...
SECONDS, MINUTES. NO, WE'RE OUT OF TIME...

"...THEY'RE THROUGH!"

I CAN'T BEGIN TA IMAGINE THE DEATH...

...THE *HORROR.*

I TRY TA CONCENTRATE, BUT WITH *EVERY* SECOND I LOSE--

THE HORROR OUTSIDE GROWS-- THE *SCREAMS,* THE SENSE O' TERROR OUTSIDE...

...AND IN MY HEART TOO, BEIN' HONEST.

I'M SCARED.

I KNOW THEY'RE CLOSE, I KNOW ANY MINUTE--

I'M OUTTA TIME!

NO...

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

HEY, HANDSOME.

LOT I WANNA SAY, HANK.

LOT I WANNA HEAR YOU SAY, JANET...

...BUT IN A MOMENT, 'KAY? IF 'N' IT'S ALL THE SAME...

HANK PYM, I NEED TO KNOW--

WHOA!

'N' I'LL TELL YOU *ALL* YOU NEED TA KNOW...

...JUST AS *SOON* AS I DO *THIS!*

SIMON! FELLAS! THAT THERE'S IT!

YOU GOTTA FLY INTO IT, IS ALL. 'N' I'M SORRY...

...SORRY IT'S THE END FOR YOU!

"...NOT FOR THOSE WE CHOOSE TO PROTECT."

AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.

GOODBYE, RYOKO, MY DAR--

NO.

TOO MANY GOODBYES.

BUT IT'S NOT THE END, PYM...

PYM ALTERED MY CYBORG TECH SO THAT I CAN TAKE YOUR PLACE, JIM...

...SO YOU CAN GO ON LIVING.

AND I CAN "LIVE FOREVER"... WITH MY WONDER MAN.

'N' SO IT WAS.

GUESS I WAS EXPECTIN' MORE OF A WHIZ BANG, BUT THAT WEREN'T MEANT TA BE.

THE ENERGY WAS ENOUGH, LIKE I FIGURED.

THE BRIGHT BEAUTIFUL *LIGHT.* KIND OF HAD ALL OF US TRANSFIXED FOR A LICK...

LOOK, JIM! LOOK AT THE HORDE...

...BUT IT WAS ULTRON'S ARMY WHERE IT TOOK FOR GOOD.

'N' ULTRON?

ULTRON'S ARMY, ON THE OTHER HAND...

...OH, THEY WAS BEDAZZLED FOR MORE 'N' A LICK.

'N' ULTRON HISSELF?

NUH-UH...

...NO BETTER THAN A CLOCKWORK MAN.

LATER.
NOW THE EVER-GUARD STANDS EVER VIGILANT...
...AND LIFE BEGINS ANEW.
SO... WHAT'CHA BUILDING?
NOTHING.
JUST CLEANIN' UP.
WANNA HELP?
YEAH...
...FOR THOSE OF US STILL LIVING.
SO, YOU BEING ALIVE AND ALL...WHAT ARE WE GOING TO NAME OUR CHILD? YOU STILL WANT STEVE?
I LOVE YOU, RYOKO.
ILOVEYOURYOKO IS A TERRIBLE NAME.
THE END.
MARVEL